

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 MEXICO 09690 01 OF 02 122106Z
ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0796

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 09690

FOR: ARA/MEX

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, MX
SUBJECT: ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS OF U.S.
HISPANICS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF JUNE 9 WIRENOTE FROM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ CONTAINING FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE IN JUNE 8 EL PASO TIMES BY STEVE PETERS, TIMES AUSTIN BUREAU:
 2. "AUSTIN -- A GROUP OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS, ANGERED BY WHAT ONE OF THEM CALLED "AN INHERENT CONTRADICTION IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS STAND," PLANS TO DOCUMENT MORE THAN 50 CASES OF WHAT IT TERMS HAVE BEEN POLICE BRUTALITY AGAINST U.S. HISPANICS AT A JUNE 15 PRESS CONFERENCE IN MEXICO CITY.
 3. SIX CASES IN WHICH MEXICAN-AMERICANS ALLEGEDLY WERE KILLED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED, AND COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE BODIES OF THE DEAD WILL BE DISTRIBUTED. OTHER CASES WILL BE DESCRIBED IN AN ACCOMPANYING PACKET THAT WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS
- UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 MEXICO 09690 01 OF 02 122106Z

MEDIA.

4. 'OUR PURPOSE IS TO POINT OUT MR. CARTER THROUGH THE FOREIGN PRESS THAT WHILE HE TALKS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS ABROAD, HE SHOULD TALK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AT HOME,' SAID JOSE ANGEL GUTIERREZ, COUNTY JUDGE OF ZAVALA COUNTY, TEX., AND A FOUNDER OF THE RAZA

UNIDA POLITICAL PARTY.

5. THE GROUP THAT WILL GO TO MEXICO CITY INCLUDES DEMOCRATS, SEVERAL OF WHOM SUPPORTED CARTER IN HIS 1976 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN AMONG THEM ARE STATE REP. PAUL MORENO OF EL PASO; RUBEN BONILLA OF CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS DIRECTOR OF THE LEAGUE OF UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS; AND TONY MORALES OF FORT WORTH, NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN GI FORUM. IT ALSO CLAIMS THE SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN EDUCATION AND LEGAL DEFENSE FUND (MALDEF), VIL MARTINEZ OF SAN FRANCISCO; NEW MEXICO LAND GRANT ACTIVIST REYES LOPEZ TIJERINA; AND ROBERTO PINA OF THE OFFICE OF HISPANIC AFFAIRS OF THE U.S. CATHOLIC CONFERENCE.

6. RUBEN SANDOVAL, A SAN ANTONIO CIVIL RIGHTS LAWYER, SAID THE PRESS CONFERENCE WILL FOCUS ON CASES INVOLVING THE DEATHS OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS IN ODESSA, HOUSTON, DALLAS, AND CASTROVILLE IN TEXAS; OAKLAND, CALIF; AND ALBUQUERQUE.

7. SUPPORTIVE CASES INCLUDE THREE KILLINGS AND TWO BEATINGS IN AN AROUND EL PASO, AND FIVE BEATINGS IN NEW MEXICO.

8. OFFICIALS AT THE WHITE HOUSE AND U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT WERE RELUCTANT TO COMMENT. A STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID HE WAS UNAWARE OF THE PLANNED UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 MEXICO 09690 01 OF 02 122106Z

PRESS CONFERENCE AND DECLINED TO SPECULATE ON ITS POSSIBLE EFFECTS. AN ASSISTANT TO JOE ARAGON, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR HISPANIC AFFAIRS, SAID SHE KNEW NOTHING OF THE GROUP'S PLAN.

9. SANDOVAL, WHO SAID HE HAS APPOINTMENTS IN WASHINGTON ON THURSDAY AND FRIDAY WITH SEN. BIRCH BAYH, D-IND., AND PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT JACK WATSON TO DISCUSS THE CASES, SAID THE WHITE HOUSE RECEIVED A LETTER DETAILING THE GROUP'S POSITION AND ITS PLANS FOR JUNE 15. A MALDEF OFFICIAL, JANE COUCH SAID THE LETTER WAS HAND-DELIVERED TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

10. THE GROUP, WHICH HAS NO FORMAL NAME, HAS REQUESTED A MEETING WITH CARTER.

11. IT ALSO IS NEGOTIATING FOR AN AUDIENCE WITH MEXICAN PRESIDENT JOSE LOPEZ PORTILLO.

12. AT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, A SPOKESMAN SAID MALDEF HAD SUBMITTED 56 CASES FOR EXAMINATION FOR POSSIBLE CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND MOST OF THEM ARE THE SUBJECT OF FEDERAL INQUIRES.

13. 'I REALLY DON'T THINK THAT PRESIDENT CARTER KNOWS WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON,' MORENO SAID. 'I

DO NOT THINK THAT HIS STAFF IS CONVEYING THE SERIOUS-
NESS OF THESE PROBLEMS.'

14. BONILLA CHARACTERIZED A WEAKENING OF CARTER'S
POSTURE REGARDING INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AS 'A
POSSIBLE REPERCUSSION,' BUT SAID: 'I THINK THE
PRESIDENT CAN AVOID THAT EMBARRASSMENT BY MEETING
WITH (U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL GRIFFIN) BELL AND
INSURING THAT THERE IS A PROMPT AND EXPEDITIOUS
INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF THOSE CASES THAT

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 09690 02 OF 02 122112Z

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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 MEXICO 09690

MERIT THAT ACTION. IF THE ACTION IS NOT TAKEN, THE
PRESIDENT RUNS THE DANGER OF BEING ACCUSED OF POLITICAL
HYPOCRISY.'

15. GUTIERREZ SAID THE TREATMENT OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS
IN THE SOUTHWEST COMPARES WITH THE PERSECUTION OF
MINORITIES AND DISSIDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA, ZAIRE AND
CHILE.

16. IN MEXICO CITY, AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST SAID
SUCH AN EVENT AS THE ONE PLANNED JUNE 15 MAY RECEIVE
EXTENSIVE COVERAGE BY MEXICAN AND SOUTH AMERICAN
NEWSPAPERS. CHARLES GREEN, CHIEF OF THE ASSOCIATED
PRESS BUREAU THERE, SAID NEWSPAPERS IN SEVERAL
REPRESSIVE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES HAVE FAULTED
CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE GROUNDS
THAT HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE U.S. ARE NOT ABOVE REPROACH.

17. THE CASES THE GROUP PLANS TO DISCUSS
INCLUDE:

18. -- THE CASE OF LORENZO ORTOGA LOZANO, WHO DIED
JAN. 22 IN ODESSA. HE WAS ARRESTED AFTER HIS CAR
SLID OFF THE ROAD AND WAS CHARGED WITH TWO COUNTS
OF AGGRAVATED ASSAULT BY ECTOR COUNTY
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PAGE 02 MEXICO 09690 02 OF 02 122112Z

SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES WHO, ACCORDING TO MALDEF, BEAT
LOZANO. TWELVE DAYS LATER, HE WAS FOUND DEAD IN A
PADDED CELL IN THE ECTOR COUNTY JAIL; JAIL OFFICIALS
SAID HE HAD BEATEN HIMSELF TO DEATH BY BANGING HIS
HEAD AGAINST THE WALL.

19. -- THE CASE OF RICARDO MORALES, WHO DIED SEPT.
14, 1975 IN CASTROVILLE, TEX. MARSHALL FRANK HAYES
ARRESTED HIM IN A BURGLARY INVESTIGATION, DROVE HIM
INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE, KILLED HIM ON A DESERTED ROAD
AND BURIED THE BODY SOME DISTANCE AWAY. A STATE COURT
FOUND HAYES GUILTY OF AGGRAVATED ASSAULT AND SENTENCED
HIM TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON. HIS WIFE, WHO HELPED
BURY THE BODY, WAS GIVEN ONE YEAR'S PROBATION.

20. -- THE CASE OF SANTOS RODRIGUEZ, WHO DIED IN
DALLAS ON JULY 25, 1973. RODRIGUEZ, 13, WAS PICKED
UP FOR QUESTIONING ABOUT A SERVICE STATION ROBBERY BY
POLICE OFFICER DARRELL CAIN. IN THE BACK OF THE SEAT
OF THE CAR, CAIN PUT A LOADED PISTOL TO RODRIGUEZ' HEAD
AND PULLED THE TRIGGER - KILLING HIM.

21. -- THE CASE OF JOSE CAMPOS-TORRES, WHO WAS BEATEN
AND DROWNED IN A HOUSTON BAYOU ON MAY 5, 1977.
THREE OF SIX POLICE OFFICERS INVOLVED WERE
SENTENCED TO ONE YEAR'S PROBATION BY A STATE COURT,
WHICH PROMPTED THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO TAKE ON THE
CASE.

22. -- THE CASE OF ANDREW MARTINEZ, WHO DIED NOV.
19, 1977, IN ALBUQUERQUE. HIS MOTHER CALLED POLICE
TO HAVE THEM REMOVE HER SON FROM THE HOUSE BECAUSE
HE WAS DRUNK AND ABUSIVE. POLICE ALLEGEDLY BEAT HIM
ON THE HEAD WITH A FLASHLIGHT AND DRAGGED HIM OUT OF
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PAGE 03 MEXICO 09690 02 OF 02 122112Z

THE HOUSE. HE WAS TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL, WHERE HE
WAS PRONOUNCED DEAD.

23. -- THE CASE OF BARLOW BENAVIDEZ, WHO DIED JUNE 11,
1976 IN OAKLAND, CALIF. HE WAS STOPPED IN RELATION

TO A STOLEN CAR INVESTIGATION BY A POLICE OFFICER WHO
ORDERED HIM TO SPREAD-EAGLE AGAINST THE CAR
AND SEARCHED HIM, HOLDING A COCKED SHOTGUN AT HIS
HEAD. THE GUN FIRED, AND BENAVIDEZ WAS KILLED.
MALDEF SAID IT FOUND EVIDENCE OF A POLICE COVERUP
IN THE CASE."

24. REQUEST ASAP WHATEVER INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON
SIX CASES CITED ABOVE AND GUIDANCE THEREON. LUCEY

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